United Nations S/2013/588

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 October 2013

Original: English

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you the concept paper for the Security Council briefing on the theme entitled "Strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation", to be held on 28 October 2013 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security: strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Concept paper of Azerbaijan

Introduction

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Member States conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf (Art. 24). Chapter VIII of the Charter also encourages cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes (Arts. 52 and 53).

International peace and security are faced nowadays with many threats and challenges, and it is imperative that the United Nations and regional and other organizations enhance their cooperation to address them comprehensively and effectively.

As part of its presidency of the Security Council in October 2013, Azerbaijan intends to convene a high-level meeting with the purpose of exploring ideas and measures for strengthening the partnership synergy between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Past resolutions, presidential statements of the Security Council and relevant reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations can be useful references.

Background

With 57 member States from four continents, OIC (formerly Organization of the Islamic Conference) is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations (see www.oic-oci.org).

The Charter of OIC, adopted in 2008, stressed the determination of its member States "to contribute to international peace and security, understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, and promote and encourage friendly relations and good neighbourliness, mutual respect and cooperation" (ibid.).

OIC is an important partner of the United Nations in promoting peace and security and fostering a culture of peace at the global level (see General Assembly resolution 67/264). OIC has enjoyed observer status in the General Assembly since 1975 (General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX)). It was among organizations invited by the Security Council, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to participate and make statements at the Council's previous deliberations on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

In his report, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recognized the enhancement of practical cooperation and the building of complementarity between the United Nations and OIC (see A/67/280-S/2012/614, paras. 106-116). In its resolution 67/264, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In 2012, the Secretary-General of the United Nations visited, for the first time, the headquarters of OIC. A general meeting on cooperation between the two organizations was held in Geneva in 2012, during which they declared strong commitment to reinforcing cooperation in areas of common interest, such as conflict prevention and mediation, human rights, humanitarian assistance and refugees, the fight against terrorism and intercultural dialogue. The strengthened spirit of cooperation manifested itself in the agreement on a matrix of activities within the framework of United Nations-OIC collaboration, to be implemented over the next biennium (ibid., para. 106).

On 3 and 4 April 2012, OIC, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe held, at the OIC secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, a joint consultative session on consolidating the role of mediation attended by senior officials from prominent regional and international organizations (see General Assembly resolution 67/264). The participants exchanged views on the role of OIC in conflict prevention and resolution and on the prospects for further developing cooperation between the three organizations. They also discussed follow-up efforts towards the implementation of the milestone resolution of the General Assembly on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (resolution 65/283).

In 2012, the United Nations and OIC agreed on a one-year partnership programme, which aims at enhancing their cooperation and exchange of experiences and at strengthening the operational capacity of OIC in the area of mediation through the establishment of a mediation unit (A/67/280-S/2012/614, para. 108).

The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and OIC explored possible areas of cooperation within the framework of Security Council resolution 1963 (2010), particularly with regard to the adoption of national counter-terrorism strategies (ibid., para. 109). From 28 to 30 May 2013, OIC, with the cooperation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, held a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), with a focus on countering incitement to commit terrorist acts and enhancing cultural dialogue.[a] The Executive Directorate also agreed to facilitate the engagement of OIC with the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

In order to address the threats and challenges facing the OIC member States, the Islamic Summit Conference, at its third extraordinary session, held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on 7 and 8 December 2005, adopted the Ten-year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Muslim Ummah in the Twenty-first Century (A/60/633-S/2005/826, annex III). It called, inter alia, for strengthening of OIC activities in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict

[a] Additional information about the event is available from www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/news/2013-05-31_jeddah.html.

resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in cooperation with international and regional organizations.

The United Nations has worked closely with OIC in efforts to restore peace and security in Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Sudan/Darfur. OIC opened offices in Kabul and Mogadishu in 2011. In Afghanistan, OIC held discussions with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to support the intra-Afghan reconciliation process. The United Nations and OIC have worked together to facilitate negotiations between Darfuri armed movements and the Government of the Sudan (ibid., para. 107). The two organizations have worked together in reconstruction and development on Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Somalia (General Assembly resolution 67/264, para. 13). The United Nations and OIC also share common objectives in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process (ibid., para. 4), as well as in fostering solutions to other conflicts in accordance with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Over the years, the United Nations and OIC have developed partnership and cooperation in humanitarian, human rights, social, economic and cultural fields, as well as in combating religious intolerance and discrimination. OIC is one of the active contributors to international efforts aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding within the framework of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and other initiatives in this regard (see General Assembly resolution 67/264).

Areas to be explored

In addition to reviewing progress made in developing and strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OIC, the meeting may focus on, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- What are the opportunities and the appropriate approaches that can better serve the purpose of enhancing interaction and cooperation between the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and OIC?
- How can the role and responsibilities of OIC as an intergovernmental organization be better defined in line with the Charter of the United Nations?
- What are the opportunities for a more comprehensive engagement of OIC in the efforts of the United Nations in the fields of preventive diplomacy and mediation?
- How can the advantages possessed by OIC be better utilized to enable early responses to disputes and emerging crises?
- What are the opportunities for closer cooperation between the two organizations in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction processes?
- How can coordination be further improved at the institutional level between the two organizations?
- How to increase technical and other forms of assistance to OIC and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to strengthen their capacities for cooperation.

Format of the meeting

The meeting will be held in a briefing format at the ministerial level and will be presided over by the high-level representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is anticipated that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of OIC will address the meeting.